

DISTRICTWIDE DATA SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION AND STAGING QUESTIONS

Purpose	This tool can help district personnel and other stakeholders plan for the implementation of a districtwide data system. The tool contains questions categorized by key areas: general planning, personnel, training and support, system use, communication, diverse stakeholders, and information technology capacity. District personnel can consider these questions as they plan for full implementation of a data system.
Materials	None
Media	None
Topic	Data-Driven Instructional Decision Making
Practice	Districtwide Data Systems

Districtwide Data System Implementation and Staging Questions

Introduction

Implementing a districtwide data system is a lengthy process that may involve multiple phases of releasing new system platforms and functionalities, multiple phases and levels of training, and careful coordination of information technology support. Use the questions below to consider all aspects of the implementation efforts. This list of questions may be modified to fit the needs of your district. It is likely the a district will not be able to answer all of these questions at the outset of the process. Thus district personnel and other stakeholders may wish to periodically review these questions as the district goes the selection and implementation process.

General Planning

- Will an advisory council¹ oversee the implementation and staging of the data system? What would be the council's roles and responsibilities?
- What is the timeline for launching the system platforms?
- What existing systems will be replaced by the new one? How and when will they be phased out?
- What is the system's capacity to communicate and exchange data with other systems (interoperability)? In particular, what data will need to be exchanged with the state or state data systems? How will this work?

Personnel

- Who will provide leadership and ongoing oversight for technical implementation of the system? Use of the system for data-driven instructional decision making?

¹ Experts recommend that the advisory council include district leaders, school-based leaders, teachers, technology specialists, and community members.

- Who will be responsible for data management and data quality?
- Does the district have adequate technical staff resources?
- Who will be responsible for overseeing implementation at the school level?

Training and Support

- What is the envisioned extent of user support (e.g., help desks, documentation, and training)?
- To what extent will training link the system's functionalities to strategies for meeting the district's teaching and learning goals?
- To what extent will documentation and training be tailored to users' roles, professional experience, and familiarity with similar technologies?
- What are the expectations for teachers' regular use of the system to access and analyze data to support instructional decision making?

System Use

- To what extent will statistics about system use (e.g., number of users, system features that are accessed the most) be monitored and used to refine implementation plans?

- To what extent will additional data be collected through focus groups, interviews, and surveys to monitor implementation success?
- How will time and resources be allocated to ensure sufficient time and support for teachers' use of the system?

Communication

- How will staging and system enhancements be communicated to different users (e.g., district leaders, school leaders, teachers, parents, community members)?
- How will the district set and manage expectations?
- What are the legal and/or confidentiality requirements?
- Does the security policy allow for differentiated access based on users' roles and responsibilities (e.g., a principal has access to all student achievement data, but a teacher only has access to achievement data of his or her students)?
- To what extent will the identity and personal information of users be protected?

Diverse Stakeholders

- Who are the stakeholders in the district that need to be involved in the implementation and staging process?

- How will various stakeholders be involved in decisions regarding the components and technical aspects of the system?
- Who are the “thought leaders” (e.g., district staff, members of the community, experts who can articulate and translate the district’s needs into system components) that can contribute to refining the system?
- Are there any union or work rule issues involved?

Information Technology Capacity

- What are the bandwidth requirements (i.e., a data transmission rate in bits/second)?
- What are the hardware requirements (e.g., capacity of servers and computers at schools)?
- How many computers with working Internet connections should be accessible to teachers in school? Do schools have a secure, dedicated space for accessing those computers?
- Will implementing the system require software upgrades?
- What information technology support is needed at the school level?